

THE CHRISTMAS BOOK
of
CAROLS AND SONGS
with Coloured Plates
Alan Wright & V. Stokes



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**THE CHRISTMAS BOOK
OF CAROLS AND SONGS**



*Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry bcys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame she
Bids you all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.*

THE CHRISTMAS BOOK

OF

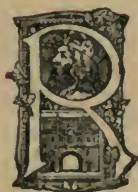
CAROLS AND SONGS

Edited by

W. S. W. ANSON

With Twelve Coloured Plates by

ALAN WRIGHT AND VERNON STOKES



LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LIMITED

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

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Christmas-Eve

CHRISTMAS-EVE

COME guard this night the Christmas-pie,
That the thief, though ne'er so sly,
With his flesh-hooks, don't come nigh
 To catch it
From him, who all alone sits there,
Having his eyes still in his ear,
And a deal of nightly fear,
 To watch it.

Robert Herrick.



*Come guard this night the Christmas pie
That the thief, though ne'er so sly,
With his flesh-hooks, don't come nigh
To catch it.*

*For him who alone sits there,
Having his eyes still in his ear,
And a deal of mighty fear,
To watch it.*

Christmas in the Olden Time

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME

THE damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;
The hall was dressed with holly green ;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go
To gather in the misletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all ;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village-partner chuse ;
The lord underogating share
The vulgar game of post-and-pair.
All hailed with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage as the crown
Brought tidings of salvation down.

Christmas in the Olden Time

The fire with well-dried logs supplied
Went roaring up the chimney wide ;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn
By old blue-coated serving-man ;
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
Crested with bay and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell
How, when, and where the monster fell ;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons blithely trowls.
There the huge sir-loin reeked ; hard by
Plum-porridge stood and Christmas pie ;

Christmas in the Olden Time

Nor failed old Scotland to produce
At such high tide her savoury goose.
Then came the merry masquers in
And carols roared with blithesome din ;
If unmelodious was the song
It was a hearty note and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery ;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made :
But, oh ! what masquers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light !
England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Sir Walter Scott,
(*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto VI.)

Now Enter Christmas like a Man

NOW ENTER CHRISTMAS LIKE A MAN

Now enter Christmas like a man,
Armed with spit and dripping-pan,
Attended with pasty, plum-pie,
Puddings, plum-porridge, furmity;
With beef, pork, mutton of each sort
More than my pen can make report;
Pig, swan, goose, rabbits, partridge, teal,
With legs and loins and breasts of veal:
But above all the minced pies
Must mention'd be in any wise,
Or else my Muse were much to blame,
Since they from Christmas take their name.
With these, or any one of these,
A man may dine well if he please;
Yet this must well be understood,—
Though one of these be singly good,

Now Enter Christmas like a Man

Yet more the merrier is the best
As well of dishes as of guest.

But the times are grown so bad
Scarce one dish for the poor is had ;
Good housekeeping is laid aside,
And all is spent to maintain pride ;
Good works are counted popish, and
Small charity is in the land.

A man may sooner (truth I tell ye)
Break his own neck than fill his belly.
Good God, amend what is amiss
And send a remedy to this,
That Christmas day again may rise
And we enjoy our Christmas pies.

Provide for Christmas

PROVIDE FOR CHRISTMAS

PROVIDE for Christmas ere that it do come,
To feast thy neighbour good cheer to have some ;
Good bread and drink, a fire in the hall,
Brawn, pudding, souse and good mustard withal ;
Beef, mutton, pork, and shred pies of the best,
Pig, veal, goose, capon, and turkey well drest ;
Apples and nuts to throw about the hall,
That boys and girls may scramble for them all.
Sing jolly carols, make the fiddlers play,
Let scrupulous fanatics keep away ;
For oftentimes is seen no arranter knave
Than some who do counterfeit most to be grave.



*Wash your hands or else the fire
Will not teend to your desire ;
Unwash'd hands, ye maidens, know,
Dead the fire, though ye blow.*

To Maids

TO MAIDS

WASH your hands or else the fire
Will not teend to your desire ;
Unwash'd hands, ye maidens, know,
Dead the fire, though ye blow.

Robert Herrick.

Maids, Get up and Bake your Pies

MAIDS, GET UP AND BAKE YOUR PIES

MAIDS, get up and bake your pies,
Bake your pies, bake your pies ;
Maids, get up and bake your pies,
'Tis Christmas day in the morning.

See the ships all sailing by,
Sailing by, sailing by ;
See the ships all sailing by
On Christmas day in the morning.

Dame, what made your Ducks to die

DAME, WHAT MADE YOUR DUCKS TO DIE

DAME, what made your ducks to die,
Ducks to die, ducks to die ;

Dame, what made your ducks to die
On Christmas day in the morning ?

You let your lazy maidens lie,
Maidens lie, maidens lie ;
You let your lazy maidens lie
On Christmas day in the morning.

So, now is Come our Joyfulst Feast

SO, NOW IS COME OUR JOYFULST FEAST

So, now is come our joyfulst feast,
Let every man be jolly ;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine ;
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimnies smoke,
And Christmas logs are burning ;
Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie ;
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury't in a Christmas pie,
And evermore be merry.

So, now is Come our Joyfulst Feast

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labour;
Our lasses have provided them
A bag-pipe and a tabor;
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys;
And you anon shall by their noise
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun;
Their hall of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.
The country folks themselves advance
For crowdy-mutton's¹ come out of France;
And Jack shall pipe, and Jill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

¹ Fiddlers.

So, now is Come our Joyfulst Feast

Ned Squash hath fetched his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel;
Brisk Ned hath bought a ruff of lawn
With droppings of the barrel;
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat or rags to wear
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices
With capons make their arrants;
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants:
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer;
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
The poor that else were undone;

So, now is Come our Joyfulst Feast

Some landlords spend their money worse

On lust and pride at London.

There the roysters they do play,

Drab and dice their lands away,

Which may be ours another day ;

And therefore let's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,

The prisoner's heart is eased ;

The debtor drinks away his cares,

And for the time is pleased.

Though other purses be more fat,

Why should we pine or grieve at that ?

Hang sorrow !: care will kill a cat,

And therefore let's be merry.

Hark ! how the wags abroad do call

Each other forth to rambling :

Anon you'll see them in the hall

For nuts and apples scrambling.

So, now is Come our Joyfulst Feast

Hark ! how the roofs with laughter sound !
Anon they'll think the house goes round :
For they the cellar's depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassail bowls
About the streets are singing ;
The boys are come to catch the owls,
The wild mare in is bringing.
Our kitchen-boy hath broke his box,
And to the dealing of the ox
Our honest neighbours come by flocks,
And here they will be merry.

Now kings and queens poor sheep-cotes have
And mate with everybody ;
The honest now may play the knave
And wise men play at noddy.

So, now is Come our Joyfulst Feast

Some youths will now a mumming go,
Some others play at Rowland-ho,
And twenty other gameboys mo,
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry days,
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelays
To make our mirth the fuller.
And whilst thus inspir'd we sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills and everything
Bear witness we are merry.

George Wither.

I Saw Three Ships come Sailing in

I SAW THREE SHIPS COME SAILING IN

I SAW three ships come sailing in
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
I saw three ships come sailing in
On Christmas day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
And what was in those ships all three
On Christmas day in the morning ?

Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
Our Saviour Christ and his lady,
On Christmas day in the morning.

I Saw Three Ships come Sailing in

Pray whither sailed those ships all three

On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;

Pray whither sailed those ships all three

On Christmas day in the morning ?

O they sailed into Bethlehem

On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;

O they sailed into Bethlehem

On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring

On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;

And all the bells on earth shall ring

On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the angels in heaven shall sing

On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;

And all the angels in heaven shall sing

On Christmas day in the morning.

I Saw Three Ships come Sailing in

And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas day, on Christmas day ;
Then let us all rejoice amain
On Christmas day in the morning.

Bring Us in Good Ale

BRING US IN GOOD ALE

*BRING us in good ale, and bring us in good ale;
For our blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good
ale.*

Bring us in no brown bread, for that is made of
bran,
Nor bring us in no white bread, for therein is no
game,
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no beef, for there is many bones,
But bring us in good ale, for that goeth down at
once;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring Us in Good Ale

Bring us in no bacon, for that is passing fat,
But bring us in good ale, and give us enough of that ;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lean,
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clean ;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no eggs, for there are many shells,
But bring us in good ale, and give us nothing else ;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no butter, for therein are many hairs,
Nor bring us in no pig's flesh, for that will make us
boars ;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no puddings, for therein is all God's good,
Nor bring us in no venison, for that is not for our
blood ;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring Us in Good Ale

Bring us in no capon's flesh, for that is ofte [n] dear,
Nor bring us in no duck's flesh, for they slobber in
the mere ;

But bring us in good ale.

The Boar's Head Carol

THE BOAR'S HEAD CAROL

SUNG AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

THE boar's head in hand bear I,
Bedecked with bays and rosemary;
And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
Quot estis in convivio.

Caput aprī defero

Reddens laudes domino.

The boar's head, as I understand,
Is the rarest dish in all this land,
Which thus bedeck'd with a gay garland
Let us servire cantico.

Caput aprī defero

Reddens laudes domino.

The Boar's Head Carol

Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the King of bliss ;
Which on this day to be served is

In Reginensi Atrio.

Caput apri defero

Reddens laudes domino.

A Hymn for Christmas Day

A HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

AWAKE, my soul, and come away :

Put on thy best array ;

Lest if thou longer stay

Thou lose some minutes of so blest a day.

Go run

And bid good-morrow to the sun ;

Welcome his safe return

To Capricorn,

And that great morn

Wherein a God was born,

Whose story none can tell

But he whose every word's a miracle.

To-day Almightyness grew weak ;

The Word itself was mute and could not speak.

A Hymn for Christmas Day

That Jacob's star which made the sun
To dazzle if he durst look on,
Now mantled o'er in Bethlehem's night,
Borrowed a star to show him light.
He that begirt each zone,
To whom both poles are one,
Who grasped the Zodiac in his hand
And made it move or stand,
Is now by nature man,
By stature but a span ;
Eternity is now grown short ;
A King is born without a court ;
The water thirsts ; the fountain's dry ;
And life, being born, made apt to die.

Chor. : Then let our praises emulate and vie
With his humility !
Since he's exiled from skies
That we might rise,—

A Hymn for Christmas Day

From low estate of men
Let's sing him up again !
Each man wind up his heart
To bear a part
In that angelic choir and show
His glory high as he was low.
Let's sing towards men goodwill and charity,
Peace upon earth, glory to God on high !
Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !

Jeremy Taylor.



*Wassail the trees, that they may bear
You many a plum and many a pear.*

Wassail the Trees

WASSAIL THE TREES

WASSAIL the trees, that they may bear
You many a plum and many a pear :
For more or less fruits they will bring,
As you do give them wassailing.

Robert Herrick.

Wassailing Song

WASSAILING SONG

WE wish you merry Christmas, also a glad New
Year ;

We come to bring you tidings to all mankind so dear ;
We come to tell that Jesus was born in Bethl'em town,
And now he's gone to glory and pityingly looks down

On us poor wassailers,

As wassailing we go ;

With footsteps sore

From door to door

We trudge through sleet and snow.

A manger was his cradle, the straw it was his bed,
The oxen were around him within that lowly shed ;
No servants waited on him with lords and ladies gay ;
But now he's gone to glory and unto him we pray.

Us poor wassailers, &c.

Wassailing Song

His mother loved and tended him and nursed him at
her breast,
And good old Joseph watched them both the while
they took their rest;
And wicked Herod vainly sought to rob them of their
child,
By slaughtering the Innocents in Bethlehem un-
defiled.

But us poor wassailers, &c.

Now, all good Christian people, with great concern
we sing
These tidings of your Jesus, the Saviour, Lord and
King;
In poverty he passed his days that riches we might
share,
And of your wealth he bids you give and of your
portion spare

To us poor wassailers, &c.

Wassailing Song

Your wife shall be a fruitful vine, a hus'sif good and
able ;

Your children like the olive branches round about
your table ;

Your barns shall burst with plenty and your crops
shall be secure

If you will give your charity to us who are so poor.

Us poor wassailers, &c.

And now no more we'll sing to you because the hour
is late,

And we must trudge and sing our song at many
another gate ;

And so we'll wish you once again a merry Christmas
time,

And pray God bless you while you give good silver
for our rhyme.

Us poor wassailers, &c.

Here We Come A-Whistling

HERE WE COME A-WHISTLING

HERE we come a-whistling through the fields so
green ;

Here we come a-singing, so fair to be seen.

God send you happy, God send you happy,
Pray God send you a happy New Year !

The roads are very dirty, my boots are very thin,
I have a little pocket to put a penny in.

God send you happy, &c.

Bring out your little table and spread it with a cloth,
Bring out some of your old ale, likewise your Christ-
mas loaf,

God send you happy, &c.

Here We Come A-Whistling

God bless the master of this house, likewise the
mistress too ;

And all the little children that round the table strew.

God send you happy, &c.

The cock sat up in the yew tree,

The hen came chuckling by,

I wish you a merry Christmas,

And a good fat pig in the sty.

The Wassail

THE WASSAIL

GIVE way, give way, ye gates, and win
An easy blessing to your bin
And basket, by our entering in.

May both with manchet¹ stand replete ;
Your larders, too, so hung with meat,
That, though a thousand, thousand eat,

Yet, ere twelve moons shall whirl about
Their silv'ry spheres, there's none may doubt
But more's sent in than was served out.

Next, may your dairies prosper so
As that your pans no ebb may know ;
But if they do, the more to flow,

¹ Fine white bread.

The Wassail

Like to a solemn sober stream
Bank'd all with lilies, and the cream
Of sweetest cowslips filling them.

Then, may your plants be prest¹ with fruit,
Nor bee or hive you have be mute ;
But sweetly sounding like a lute.

Next, may your duck and teeming hen
Both to the cock's tread say Amen ;
And for their two eggs render ten.

Last, may your harrows, shears, and ploughs,
Your stacks, your stocks, your sweetest mows,
All prosper by our virgin vows.

Alas ! we bless, but see none here
That brings us either ale or beer :
*In a dry house all things are near*².

¹ Laden.

² Penurious.

The Wassail

Let's leave a longer time to wait¹,
Where rust and cobwebs bind the gate,
And all live here with needy fate.

Where chimneys do for ever weep
For want of warmth, and stomachs keep,
With noise, the servants' eyes from sleep.

It is in vain to sing, or stay
Our free feet here ; but we'll away :
Yet to the Lares this we'll say :

The time will come when you'll be sad
And reckon this for fortune bad,
T'ave lost the good ye might have had.

Robert Herrick.

¹ *Leave to wait*: cease waiting.

Good King Wenceslas

GOOD KING WENCESLAS

GOOD King Wenceslas look'd out,
On the Feast of Stephen ;
When the snow lay round about,
Deep, and crisp, and even :
Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

' Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou know'st it telling,
Yonder peasant who is he ?
Where and what his dwelling ?'
' Sire, he lives a good league hence,
Underneath the mountain ;
Right against the forest-fence,
By Saint Agnes' fountain.'

Good King Wenceslas

'Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,
Bring me pine logs hither ;
Thou and I will see him dine,
When we bear them thither.'
Page and monarch forth they went,
Forth they went together :
Through the rude wind's wild lament
And the bitter weather.

'Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger ;
Fails my heart I know not how ;
I can go no longer.'
'Mark my footsteps, good my page ;
Tread thou in them boldly :
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.'

Good King Wenceslas

In his master's steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted ;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.

In Honour of Saint John

IN HONOUR OF SAINT JOHN WE THUS

(FOR SAINT JOHN'S DAY)

IN honour of Saint John we thus

Do keep good Christmas cheer ;
And he that comes to dine with us,
I think he need not spare.
The butcher he hath killed good beef,
The caterer brings it in ;
But Christmas pies are still the chief,
If that I durst begin.

Our bacon hogs are full and fat
To make us brawn and souse ;
Full well may I rejoyce thereat
To see them in the house.

In Honour of Saint John

But yet the minced pie it is
That sets my teeth on water ;
Good mistress, let me have a bit,
For I do long thereafter.

And I will fetch your water in
To brew and bake withal,
Your love and favour still to win
When as you please to call.
Then grant me, dame, your love and leave
To taste your pie-meat here ;
It is the best in my conceit
Of all your Christmas-cheer.

The cloves and mace and gallant plums
That here on heaps do lie,
And prunes as big as both my thumbs,
Enticeth much mine eye.
Oh, let me eat my belly-full
Of your good Christmas-pie ;
Except thereat I have a pull,
I think I sure shall die.

In Honour of Saint John

Good master, stand my loving friend,

For Christmas-time is short,

And when it comes unto an end

I may no longer sport ;

Then while it doth continue here

Let me such labour find,

To eat my fill of that good cheer

That best doth please my mind.

Then I shall thank my dame therefore,

That gives her kind consent,

That Jack your boy with others more

May have this Christmas spent

In pleasant mirth and merry glee,

As young men most delight ;

For that's the only sport for me,

And so God give you all good-night.

The Moon Shines Bright

THE MOON SHINES BRIGHT

THE moon shines bright, and the stars give a light
A little before it was day,
Our Lord, our God, he called on us,
And bid us awake and pray.

Awake, awake, good people all,
Awake, and you shall hear,
Our Lord, Our God, died on the cross,
For us whom he loved so dear.

O fair, O fair Jerusalem,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end,
Thy joy that I may see?

The Moon Shines Bright

The fields were green as green could be,
When from his glorious seat
Our Lord, our God, he watered us,
With his heavenly dew so sweet.

And for the saving of our souls
Christ died upon the cross ;
We ne'er shall do for Jesus Christ
As he has done for us.

The life of man is but a span,
And cut down in its flower ;
We are here to-day and to-morrow are gone,
We are all dead in an hour.

O pray teach your children, man,
The while that you are here ;
It will be better for your souls
When your corpse lies on the bier.

The Moon Shines Bright

To-day you may be alive, dear man,
Worth many a thousand pound ;
To-morrow may be dead, dear man,
And your body be laid under ground.

With one turf at your head, O man,
And another at your feet,
Thy good deeds and thy bad, O man,
Will all together meet.

My song is done, I must be gone,
I can stay no longer here.
God bless you all, both great and small,
And send you a happy new year !



*Kindle the Christmas brand and then
Till sunset let it burn.*



The Ceremonies for Candlemas Day

THE CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMAS DAY

KINDLE the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunset let it burn ;
Which quench'd, then lay it up again
Till Christmas next return.
Part must be kept wherewith to teend
The Christmas log next year,
And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief there.

Robert Herrick.

Mark well my Heavy Doleful 'Tale

MARK WELL MY HEAVY DOLEFUL TALE

MARK well my heavy doleful tale,
For Twelfth-day now is come,
And now I must no longer sing,
And say no words but mum ;
For I perforce must take my leave
Of all my dainty cheer,
Plum-porridge, roast beef, and minced pies,
My strong ale and my beer.

Kind-hearted Christmas, now adieu,
For I with thee must part,
And for to take my leave of thee
Doth grieve me at the heart ;
Thou wert an ancient housekeeper,
And mirth with meat didst keep,
But thou art going out of town,
Which makes me for to weep.

Mark well my Heavy Doleful Tale

God knoweth whether I again
Thy merry face shall see,
Which to good-fellows and the poor
That was so frank and free.
Thou lovedst pastime with thy heart,
And eke good company ;
Pray hold me up for fear I swoon,
For I am like to die.

Come, butler, fill a brimmer up
To cheer my fainting heart,
That to old Christmas I may drink
Before he doth depart ;
And let each one that's in this room
With me likewise condole,
And for to cheer their spirits sad
Let each one drink a bowl.

Mark well my Heavy Doleful Tale

And when the same it hath gone round
Then fall unto your cheer,
For you do know that Christmas time
It comes but once a year.
But this good draught which I have drunk
Hath comforted my heart,
For I was very fearful that
My stomach would depart.

Thanks to my master and my dame
That doth such cheer afford ;
God bless them, that each Christmas they
May furnish thus their board.
My stomach having come to me,
I mean to have a bout,
Intending to eat most heartily ;
Good friends, I do not flout.

Ceremony upon Candlemas Eve

CEREMONY UPON CANDLEMAS EVE

DOWN with the rosemary, and so
Down with the bays and mistletoe ;
Down with the holly, ivy, all,
Wherewith ye dressed the Christmas Hall :
That so the superstitious find
No one least branch there left behind :
For look, how many leaves there be
Neglected, there (maids, trust to me)
So many goblins you shall see.

Robert Herrick.

Ceremonies for Candlemas Eve

CEREMONIES FOR CANDLEMAS EVE

DOWN with the rosemary and bays,
Down with the mistletoe ;
Instead of holly, now up-raise
The greener box, for show.

The holly hitherto did sway ;
Let box now domineer
Until the dancing Easter day,
Or Easter's eve appear.

Then youthful box which now hath grace
Your houses to renew ;
Grown old, surrender must his place
Unto the crisped yew.



*Down with the rosemary and bays
Down with the mistletoe.*

Ceremonies for Candlemas Eve

When yew is out, then birch comes in,
And many flowers beside ;
Both of a fresh and fragrant kin
To honour Whitsuntide.

Green rushes, then, and sweetest bents,
With cooler oaken boughs,
Come in for comely ornaments
To re-adorn the house.

Thus times do shift : each thing his turn does hold :
New things succeed, as former things grow old.

Robert Herrick.

Twelfth Night; or King and Queen

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR KING AND QUEEN

Now, now the mirth comes
With the cake full of plums,
Where bean's the king of the sport here;
Beside we must know,
The pea also
Must revel, as queen, in the court here.

Begin then to choose,
This night as ye use,
Who shall for the present delight here,
Be a king by the lot,
And who shall not
Be Twelfth-day queen for the night here.



*Give then to the King
And the Queen wassailing.*

Twelfth Night; or King and Queen

Which known, let us make
Joy-sops with the cake ;
And let not a man then be seen here,
Who unurg'd will not drink
To the base from the brink
A health to the king and the queen here.

Next crown the bowl full
With gentle lamb's wool :
Add sugar, nutmeg, and ginger,
With store of ale too ;
And thus ye must do
To make the wassail a swinger.

Give then to the king
And queen wassailing :
And though with ale ye be whet here,
Yet part ye from hence,
As free from offence
As when ye innocent met here.

Robert Herrick.

Saint Distaff's Day

SAINT DISTAFF'S DAY; OR THE MORROW AFTER TWELFTH DAY

PARTLY work and partly play
Ye must on S. Distaff's day:
From the plough soon free your team,
Then come home and fodder them.
If the maids a-spinning go,
Burn the flax and fire the tow;
Scorch their plackets¹, but beware
That ye singe no maidenhair.
Bring in pails of water, then,
Let the maids bewash the men.
Give S. Distaff all the right,
Then bid Christmas sport good-night;
And next morrow everyone
To his own vocation.

¹ *Plackets*, petticoats.

Robert Herrick.



*From the plough soon free your team
Then come home and fodder them.*



*End now the white loaf and the pie,
And let all sports with Christmas die.*

Upon Candlemas Day

UPON CANDLEMAS DAY

END now the white loaf and the pie,
And let all sports with Christmas die.

Robert Herrick.

The First Nowell the Angel did Say

THE FIRST NOWELL THE ANGEL DID SAY

THE first Nowell the Angel did say
Was to three poor Shepherds in the fields as they lay ;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
In a cold winter's night that was so deep.

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Born is the King of Israel.*

They looked up and saw a Star
Shining in the East beyond them far ;
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

Nowell, &c.

And by the light of that same Star
Three Wise Men came from country far ;
To seek for a King was their intent,
And to follow the Star wherever it went.

Nowell, &c.

The First Nowell the Angel did Say

The Star drew nigh to the North-West,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay.

Nowell, &c.

Then did they know assuredly
Within that house the King did lie :
One enter'd in then for to see,
And found the Babe in poverty.

Nowell, &c.

Then enter'd in those Wise Men three
Most reverently upon their knee,
And offer'd there in his presence
Both gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.

Nowell, &c.

Between an ox-stall and an ass
This Child truly there, born he was ;
For want of clothing they did him lay
All in the manger among the hay.

Nowell, &c.

The First Nowell the Angel did Say

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of nought,
And with his blood mankind hath bought.

Nowell, &c.

If we in our time shall do well,
We shall be free from death and hell;
For God hath prepared for us all
A resting-place in general.

Nowell, &c.

The Shepherds

THE SHEPHERDS

O THAN the fairest day, thrice fairer night !
Night to blest days in which a sun doth rise
Of which that golden eye which clears the skies
Is but a sparkling ray, a shadow-light !
And blessed ye, in silly pastors' sight,
Mild creatures, in whose warm crib now lies
That heaven-sent youngling, holy-maid-born wight,
Midst, end, beginning of our prophecies !
Blest cottage that hath flowers in winter spread,
Though withered — blessed grass that hath the
 grace
To deck and be a carpet to that place !
Thus sang, unto the sounds of oaten reed,
Before the Babe, the shepherds bowed on knees ;
And springs ran nectar, honey dropped from trees.

William Drummond, of Hawthornden.

Ode on the Birth of Our Saviour

ODE ON THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR

IN numbers, and but these few,
I sing Thy birth, O JESU !
Thou pretty baby, born here,
With sup'rabundant scorn here ;
Who for Thy princely port here,
Hadst for Thy place
Of birth a base
Out-stable for Thy court here.

Instead of neat enclosures
Of interwoven osiers,
Instead of fragrant posies
Of daffodils and roses,
Thy cradle, Kingly Stranger,
As Gospel tells,
Was nothing else
But here a homely manger.



*Who for thy princely part here
Had'st for thy place
Of birth, a base
Out=stable for thy court here.*

Ode on the Birth of Our Saviour

But we with silks, not crewels¹,
With sundry precious jewels,
And lily-work will dress Thee ;
And as we dispossess Thee
Of clouts², we'll make a chamber,
Sweet babe, for Thee
Of ivory,
And plaister'd round with amber.

The Jews they did disdain Thee,
But we will entertain Thee
With glories to await here,
Upon Thy princely state here ;
And more for love than pity,
From year to year,
We'll make Thee, here,
A freeborn of our city.

Robert Herrick.

¹ *Crewels*, worsteds.

² *Clouts*, rags.

Christ's Nativity

CHRIST'S NATIVITY

AWAKE, glad heart ! get up and sing !
It is the Birthday of thy King.

Awake ! awake !

The sun doth shake
Light from his locks, and, all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake ! awake ! hark how th' wood rings,
Winds whisper, and the busy springs

A concert make !

Awake ! awake !

Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

Christ's Nativity

I would I were some bird, or star,
Fluttering in woods, or lifted far
 Above this inn,
 And road of sin !

Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part
Fit rooms for thee ! or that my heart
 Were so clean as
 Thy manger was !
But I am all filth, and obscene ;
Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean

Sweet Jesu ! will then. Let no more
This leper haunt and soil thy door !
 Cure him, ease him,
 O release him !
And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.

Henry Vaughan.

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

GOD rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born upon this day
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born
on Christmas day.

In Bethlehem in Jewry
This blessed babe was born,
And laid within a manger
Upon this blessed morn ;
The which his mother Mary
Nothing did take in scorn.

O tidings, &c.

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

From God our Heavenly Father

A blessed angel came,

And unto certain shepherds

Brought tidings of the same,

How that in Bethlehem was born

The Son of God by name.

O tidings, &c.

Fear not, then said the angel,

Let nothing you affright,

This day is born a Saviour

Of virtue, power, and might;

So frequently to vanquish all

The friends of Satan quite.

O tidings, &c.

The shepherds at those tidings

Rejoiced much in mind,

And left their flocks a feeding

In tempest, storm, and wind,

And went to Bethlehem straightway,

This blessed babe to find.

O tidings, &c.

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

But when to Bethlehem they came,
Whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger
Where oxen feed on hay ;
His mother Mary kneeling
Unto the Lord did pray.

O tidings, &c.

Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace ;
This holy tide of Christmas
All others doth deface.

O tidings, &c.



Declare to us, bright star.

The Star-Song

THE STAR-SONG : A CAROL TO THE KING SUNG AT WHITEHALL

The Flourish of Music; then followed the Song

1. TELL us, thou clear and heavenly tongue,
Where is the Babe but lately sprung?
Lies he the lily-banks among?
2. Or say, if this new Birth of ours
Sleeps, laid within some ark of flowers,
Spangled with dew-light; thou canst clear
All doubts, and manifest the where.
3. Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek
Him in the morning's blushing cheek,
Or search the beds of spices through,
To find him out.

The Star-Song

Star. No, this ye need not do ;
But only come and see Him rest
A Princely Babe in's mother's breast.

Chor. He's seen, He's seen ! why then a round,
Let's kiss the sweet and holy ground ;
And all rejoice that we have found
A King before conception crown'd.

4. Come then, come then, and let us bring
Unto our pretty Twelfth-tide King,
Each one his several offering ;

Chor. And when night comes, we'll give Him
wassailing ;
And that His treble honours may be seen,
We'll choose Him King, and make His Mother
Queen.

Robert Herrick.

A Hymn on the Nativity of my Saviour

A HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF MY SAVIOUR

I SING the birth was born to-night,
The author both of life and light ;
 The angels so did sound it.
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light, and were afraid,
 Yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God, th' eternal king,
That did us all salvation bring,
 And freed the soul from danger ;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,
 Was now laid in a manger.

A Hymn on the Nativity of my Saviour

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no No,
Both wills were in one stature ;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made flesh indeed,
And took on him our nature.

What comfort by him do we win,
Who made himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory !
To see this babe all innocence ;
A martyr born in our defence :
Can man forget the story ?

Ben Jonson.

Masters, in this Hall

MASTERS, IN THIS HALL

'To Bethlem did they go, the shepherds three;
To Bethlem did they go to see whe'r it were so
or no,
Whether Christ were born or no
To set men free.'

Masters, in this hall,
Hear ye news to-day
Brought over sea,
And ever I you pray.

Nowell! Nowell! Nowell! Nowell!

Sing we clear!

Holpen are all folk on earth,

Born is God's Son so dear.

Masters, in this Hall

Going over the hills,
Through the milk-white snow,
Heard I ewes bleat
While the wind did blow.

Nowell, &c.

Shepherds many an one
Sat among the sheep ;
No man spake more word
Than they had been asleep.

Nowell, &c.

Quoth I 'Fellows mine,
Why this guise sit ye ?
Making but dull cheer,
Shepherds though ye be ?

Nowell, &c.

'Shepherds should of right
Leap and dance and sing ;
Thus to see ye sit
Is a right strange thing.'

Nowell, &c.

Masters, in this Hall

Quoth these fellows then
‘To Bethlem town we go,
To see a Mighty Lord
Lie in manger low.’

Nowell, &c.

‘How name ye this Lord,
Shepherds?’ then said I.
‘Very God’ they said,
‘Come from Heaven high.’

Nowell, &c.

Then to Bethlem town
We went two and two,
And in a sorry place
Heard the oxen low.

Nowell, &c.

Therein did we see
A sweet and goodly May,
And a fair old man;
Upon the straw she lay.

Nowell, &c.

Masters, in this Hall

And a little CHILD

On her arm had she ;

'Wot ye who this is?'

Said the hinds to me.

Nowell, &c.

Ox and ass him know,

Kneeling on their knee :

Wondrous joy had I

This little BABE to see.

Nowell, &c.

This is CHRIST the Lord,

Masters, be ye glad !

Christmas is come in,

And no folk should be sad.

Nowell, &c.

In Bethелеem, that Noble Place

IN BETHELEEM, THAT NOBLE PLACE

Be we mery in this feste,
In quo salvator natus est.

IN Bethелеem, that noble place,
As by prophesy sayd it was,
Of the Vyrbyn Mary, full of grace,
Salvator mundi natus est.

Be we mery in this feste,
In quo salvator natus est.

On Chrystmas nyght an aungell it tolde
To the shephardes, kepyng theyr folde,
That unto Bethelerem with bestes wolde,
Salvator mundi natus est.

Be we mery in this feste,
In quo salvator natus est.

In Bethleem, that Noble Place

The shephardes were compassed ryght,
About them was a great lyght,
Drede ye nought, sayde the aungell bryght,
Saluator mundi natus est.

Be we mery in this feste,
In quo saluator natus est.

Beholde to you we brynge great joy,
For why? Jesus is born this day
Of Mary, that mylde May,
Saluator mundi natus est.

Be we mery in this feste,
In quo saluator natus est.

And thus in fayth fynde it ye shall,
Lyenge porely in oxe stall.
The shephardes then lauded God all.
Quia Saluator mundi natus est.

Be we mery in this feste,
In quo saluator natus est.



*What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a Carol! for to sing
The birth of this, our heavenly King?'*

A Christmas Carol Sung to the King

A CHRISTMAS CAROL SUNG TO THE KING IN THE PRESENCE AT WHITEHALL

WHAT sweeter music can we bring,
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the voice ! awake the string !
Heart, ear, and eye, and everything
Awake ! the while the active finger
Runs division with the singer.

Robert Herrick.

The New-Year's Gift

THE NEW-YEAR'S GIFT. SUNG TO THE KING IN THE PRESENCE AT WHITEHALL

1. PREPARE for songs ; He's come, He's come ;
And be it sin here to be dumb,
And not with lutes to fill the room.
2. Cast holy water all about,
And have a care no fire goes out,
But 'cense the porch and place throughout.
3. The altars all on fire be ;
The storax fries ; and ye may see
How heart and hand do all agree
To make things sweet.

Chor. : Yet all less sweet than He.

4. Bring Him along, most pious priest,
And tell us then, whenas thou seest
His gently-gliding, dove-like eyes,
And hear'st His whimpering and His cries ;
How can'st thou this Babe circumcise ?

The New-Year's Gift

5. Ye must not be more pitiful than wise ;
For, now unless ye see Him bleed,
Which makes the bapti'm, 'tis decreed
The birth is fruitless.

Chor. : Then the work God speed.

1. Touch gently, gently touch ; and here
Spring tulips up through all the year ;
And from His sacred blood, here shed,
May roses grow to crown His own dear head.

Chor. : Back, back again ; each thing is done
With zeal alike, as 'twas begun ;
Now singing, homeward let us carry
The Babe unto His mother Mary ;
And when we have the Child commended
To her warm bosom, then our rites are ended.

Robert Herrick.

Another New-Year's Gift

ANOTHER NEW-YEAR'S GIFT

1. HENCE, hence profane, and none appear
With anything unhallowed here ;
No jot of leaven must be found
Conceal'd in this most holy ground.

2. What is corrupt, or sour'd with sin,
Leave that without, then enter in ;

Chor. : But let no Christmas mirth begin
Before ye purge and circumcise
Your hearts, and hands, lips, ears, and eyes.

3. Then, like a perfum'd altar, see
That all things sweet and clean may be :
For here's a Babe that, like a bride,
Will blush to death if aught be spied
Ill-scenting, or unpurified.

Another New-Year's Gift

Chor. : The room is 'cens'd : help, help t'invoke
Heaven to come down, the while we choke
The temple with a cloud of smoke.

4. Come then, and gently touch the birth
Of Him, who's Lord of Heaven and Earth :

5. And softly handle Him ; y'ad need,
Because the pretty Babe does bleed.
Poor pitied Child ! who from Thy stall
Bring'st, in Thy blood, a balm that shall
Be the best New-Year's gift to all.

1. Let's bless the Babe : and, as we sing
His praise, so let us bless the King.

Chor. : Long may He live till He hath told
His New-Years trebled to His old :
And when that's done, to re-aspire
A new-born Phoenix from His own chaste fire.

Robert Herrick.

Joys Seven

JOYS SEVEN

THE first good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of one,
To see her own Son Jesus
To suck at her breast bone ;
To suck at her breast bone,
Good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
And Christ to eternity.

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of two,
To see her own Son Jesus
To make the lame to go ;
To make the lame to go,
Good man, &c.

Joys Seven

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of three,
To see her own Son Jesus
To make the blind to see
To make the blind to see,
Good man, &c.

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of four,
To see her own Son Jesus
To read the Bible o'er;
To read the Bible o'er,
Good man, &c.

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of five,
To see her own Son Jesus
To raise the dead alive;
To raise the dead alive,
Good man, &c.

Joys Seven

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of six,
To see her own Son Jesus
To wear the crucifix;
To wear the crucifix,
Good man, &c.

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of seven,
To see her own Son Jesus
To wear the crown of Heaven;
To wear the crown of Heaven,
Good man, and blessed may he be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
And Christ to eternity.

The Virgin and Child

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD

THIS endris night¹

I saw a sight,

A star as bright as day ;

And ever among

A maiden sung,

Lullay, by by, lullay.

This lovely lady sat and sang, and to her child she
said :

‘ My son, my brother, my father dear, why liest thou
thus in hay’d² ?

My sweet bird,

Thus it is betide

Though thou be king veray ;

But, nevertheless,

I will not cease

To sing, by by, lullay.

¹ Last night.

² Hay.

The Virgin and Child

The child then spake ; in his talking he to his mother
said :

‘ I bekid¹ am king, in crib though I be laid ;
For angels bright
Down to me light,
Thou knowest it is no nay,
And of that sight
Thou mayest be light
To sing, by by, lullay.’

‘ Now, sweet Son, since thou art king, why art thou
laid in stall ?

Why not thou ordain thy bedding in some great
king’s hall ?

Methinketh it is right
That king or knight
Should be in good array ;
And them among
It were no wrong
To sing, by by, lullay.’

¹ *I.e.* it happens that I am king.

The Virgin and Child

'Mary, mother, I am thy child, though I be laid in
stall,

Lords and dukes shall worship me and so shall
kingès all.

Ye shall well see
That kingès three

Shall come on the twelfth day;
For this behest
Give me thy breast,
And sing, by by, lullay.'

'Now tell me, sweet Son, I thee pray, thou art my
love and dear,

How should I keep thee to thy pay¹ and make thee
glad of cheer?

For all thy will
I would fulfil

Thou weet'st² full well in fay,
And for all this
I will thee kiss,
And sing, by by, lullay.'

¹ Content.

² Knowest.

The Virgin and Child

‘My dear mother, when time it be, take thou me up
aloft,

And set me upon thy knee and handle me full soft.

And in thy arm

Thou wilt me warm,

And keep me night and day;

If I weep

And may not sleep

Thou sing, by by, lullay.’

‘Now, sweet Son, since it is so, all things are at thy
will,

I pray thee grant to me a boon if it be right and skill¹,

That child or man,

That will or can,

Be merry upon my day;

To bliss them bring,

And I shall sing,

Lullay, by by, lullay.

¹ Fitting.

The New-Year's Gift

THE NEW-YEAR'S GIFT

LET others look for pearl and gold,
Tissues, or tabbies manifold :
One only lock of that sweet hay
Whereon the blessed baby lay,
Or one poor swaddling-clout, shall be
The richest New-Year's Gift to me.

Robert Herrick.

The Holy Well

THE HOLY WELL

As it fell out one May morning,
And upon one bright holiday,
Sweet Jesus asked of his dear mother,
If he might go to play.

To play, to play, sweet Jesus shall go,
And to play pray get you gone ;
And let me hear of no complaint
At night when you come home.

Sweet Jesus went down to yonder town,
As far as the Holy Well,
And there did see as fine children
As any tongue can tell.

The Holy Well

He said, God bless you every one,
And your bodies Christ save and see :
Little children, shall I play with you,
And you shall play with me ?

But they made answer to him, No :
They were lords' and ladies' sons ;
And he, the meanest of them all,
Was but a maiden's child, born in an ox's stall.

Sweet Jesus turned him around,
And he neither laughed nor smiled,
But the tears came trickling from his eyes
Like water from the skies.

Sweet Jesus turned him about,
To his mother's dear home went he,
And said, I have been in yonder town,
As far as you can see.

The Holy Well

I have been down in yonder town
As far as the Holy Well,
There did I meet as fine children
As any tongue can tell.

I bid God bless them every one,
And their bodies Christ save and see :
Little children, shall I play with you,
And you shall play with me ?

But they made answer to me, No :
They were lords' and ladies' sons ;
And I, the meanest of them all,
Was but a maiden's child, born in an ox's stall.

Though you are but a maiden's child,
Born in an ox's stall,
Thou art the Christ, the King of heaven,
And the Saviour of them all.

The Holy Well

Sweet Jesus, go down to yonder town
As far as the Holy Well,
And take away those sinful souls,
And dip them deep in hell.

Nay, nay, sweet Jesus said,
Nay, nay, that may not be;
For there are too many sinful souls
Crying out for the help of me.

Printed at
The Edinburgh Press, 9 and 11 Young Street

"Carols and Poems from the Fiftieth
Century to the Present Time" - 820.11
- A. H. Benson 1387

"Christmas: its History, Festivities
and Carols" (- 394
- William Sandys. F. S. A. 8a 5)

A "Christmas Masque" by Ben Jonson
(13823 7731)

Casts of characters very interesting;
Merrill, Carol, Miss's Pie, Gambol etc

"Christmas Rose" - 810.81 C 462 - a
Christmas story of the earlier, frois sort
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"The Three Golden Peppins" in it, an
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